diesel subsidy scheme of MPEDA in the coming fishing season; and

(b) steps being taken to assist trawler owners in Andhra Pradesh under this scheme?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) Government has recently modified the HSD price reimbursement scheme by extending it to supplies taken by eligible vessels through mid-sea bunkering from sources abroad.

(b) The benefits under the scheme is available to all eligible deep sea fishing vessels including those operated by trawler owners from Andhra Pradesh.

Purchase of Tobacco from Andhra Pradesh by erstwhile countries of soviet Union

7370. SHRI V. HANUMANTHA RAO: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the erstwhile countries of Soviet Union have shown any interest in the purchase of Andhra tobacco from the 1994 tobacco crop;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) Expected quantities to be purchased by erstwhile Soviet Union this year?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) to (c) The Indian Government has been pursuing with the Russian Government to import assured quantities of tobacco under the debt repayment route. However, it is not possible to anticipate the expected quantities to be purchased by the CIS countries this year because, as gathered from the trade, no firm indications have been received by the exporters in this regard.

Effect of restrictive legislation on tobacco economy

7371. SHRI V. HANUMANTHA RAO : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that the Tobacco Board held a Board Meeting in May 1994 to consider the adverse effects of restrictive legislation on tobacco economy ;

(b) the details of the decision of the Tobacco Board in this regard ; and

(c) steps being taken to protect the tobacco economy of Andhra Pradesh ?.

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE) : (a) and (b) The subject was discussed in an informal meeting which representatives of manufacturers, exporters, farmers, some Board members and Director, Tobacco Institute of India attended.

The meeting resolved to recommend to Govt. the following :—

(1) To refer the proposed legislation to an expert committee for a thorough examination of its provision and related aspects.

(2) The whole gamut of issues should be discussed with the Tobacco industry, growers, trade, research scientists, Govt. bodies involved with Tobacco concerned State Govts., Advertising and Market Research agencies etc.

(3) To keep the proposed legislation in abeyance till the completion of the process of consultation with various interest groups and submission of recommendation of the .roposed Committee.